

are famished.  
what should be remembered  
is -- it takes very little  
to live or die or love  
and less  
to write a poem.  
don't make it seem  
more than this.  
what I call poetry  
you may call my escape,  
but surely  
whatever it is  
leads us all  
to the same absurdity  
for which none of us  
can be blamed.

### Tropical Fish

My cousin sits in his  
beautiful Spanish house,  
his wife gone, his children  
reduced to visitors.  
The tropical fish  
swim dreamily in the tank  
as though nothing  
had changed.  
My cousin's new freedom  
is nineteen years old  
and makes love to him  
on the shag carpet  
that took so long to buy.  
When she leaves him  
he will go on  
feeding the fish.  
He has learned a lot  
in the last few months.

### When It Doesn't Matter

The fish on the worm  
and the worm on the hook and you  
hanging onto the pole  
and the boat holding you  
and the water keeping it afloat  
and something underneath  
which I have neither time  
nor interest  
in telling you about.

Pay up or poke me with a stick  
or salute me like a dandy general.  
Split me open and serve me  
sprinkled with Worcestershire sauce  
a sizzled menebroker  
on a sesame bun.

-- Ann Menebroker

Wilton, CA

### Happily Ever After

Princess, do you snore  
Midway dreams of Disneyland,  
Or will a cinder touch your eye  
As you descend like Mary Poppins.  
To the edge of reality?  
Were you conceived in blushes  
At the Spring Prom,  
Or did you begin  
As a once upon a time girl?

Princess, do you sweat,  
As you count your scents  
And brush your hair spun gold  
From drugstore potions?  
Undies matched as carefully  
As your placemats,  
You part your maidenhair  
And guard your maidenhead.

Princess, do you fuck,  
Or wait for singular love  
From a charming prince?  
To you a cock must crow  
Dick is a first name  
And aphrodisia a spray-on.  
You rewrite recipes;  
Raise your chest in hope,  
But your hands are cold -- eyes afraid.

The pill is only sugar, princess;  
Your trembles will aid the cause.  
Stiff upper lip, old girl.  
Practice the magic  
Of words like yes and come.  
Go wash your bush,  
Fluff your pillow  
And live happily.